

Chancellor here to increase the number of charter schools here in New York. I appreciate the fact that they're taking a bold initiative. As I understand, they want to double the number of charter schools available for the students here in New York, and that's a good thing. You know, Margaret is going to help you, to the extent that she can.

So now we're in the process of rewriting this bill—reauthorizing it. Here's my attitude about this: One, Congress shouldn't weaken the bill. It's working. The No Child Left Behind Act is working. These test scores are on the rise. Accountability makes a significant difference in educational excellence.

And so therefore, when Republicans and Democrats take a look at this bill, I strongly urge them to not weaken the bill, not to backslide, not to say, accountability isn't that important. It is important. We'll work with the school districts on flexibility when it comes to the accountability system. And I mean that there are certain ways that we can make this—the accountability system actually work better than it's worked in the past.

But we will not allow this good piece of legislation to be weakened. And if you're a parent, you should insist that the No Child Left Behind Act remain a strong accountability tool so that every child in this country gets a good education. I'll reach out to both Republicans and Democrats again. Last time I signed the bill, I was on the stage with one of Charlie's good friends and colleagues, Congressman George Miller from California, Ted Kennedy, and two Republican colleagues of theirs. And it was—we worked well together.

And so my pledge is that I will continue to reach out and work with the new leadership of the Congress, all aimed at making sure this piece of legislation goes forward and making sure it's funded, so that we can say, once again, we've got law in place that will enable us to give every child as good an education as possible so that not one child, not one, is left behind in our country.

It's such an honor to be here. I love coming to a place where people defy expectations. I love coming to a place where you said, we're going to try to do something in a different way, that the status quo is not acceptable, so here we go. I love being with

educational entrepreneurs, good principals, strong teachers, caring parents, and students who are going to be leading this Nation in the 21st century.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Kenny, founder and chief executive officer, Village Academies; Mateo Myers, student, and Justin Fong, math teacher and department chair, Harlem Village Academy Charter School; Joel I. Klein, chancellor, New York City Department of Education; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; and Gov. Eliot Spitzer of New York. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Interagency Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes

April 24, 2007

The brave men and women who have volunteered to protect and defend our country deserve to receive the highest level of support from our grateful Nation. Today Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson and members of the Interagency Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes released a government-wide action plan that sets out steps to improve our care for America's troops and veterans.

The task force has proposed specific recommendations to immediately begin addressing the problems and gaps in services that were identified across the veterans and military healthcare systems. These recommendations include directing the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a joint process for disability determination. Additionally, I have asked Secretary Nicholson to communicate directly with the members of the Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors to ensure that both groups exchange ideas and information that will efficiently advance reform efforts.

I commend the work of the task force, welcome its recommendations, and have directed Secretary Nicholson to work with all agencies involved on the recommendations

and to report back to me within 45 days on how these measures are being implemented.

Message on Armenian Remembrance Day

April 24, 2007

Each year on this day, we pause to remember the victims of one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, when as many as 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, many of them victims of mass killings and forced exile. I join my fellow Americans and Armenian people around the world in commemorating this tragedy and honoring the memory of the innocent lives that were taken. The world must never forget this painful chapter of its history.

All who cherish freedom and value the sanctity of human life look back on these horrific events in sorrow and disbelief. Many of those who survived were forced from their ancestral home and spread across the globe. Yet, in the midst of this terrible struggle, the world witnessed the indomitable spirit and character of the Armenian people. Many of the brave survivors came to America, where they have preserved a deep connection with their history and culture. Generations of Armenians in the United States have enriched our country and inspired us with their courage and conviction.

Today, we remember the past and also look forward to a brighter future. We commend the individuals in Armenia and Turkey who are working to normalize the relationship between their two counties [countries].* A sincere and open examination of the historic events of the late-Ottoman period is an essential part of this process. The United States supports and encourages those in both countries who are working to build a shared understanding of history as a basis for a more hopeful future.

We value the strong and vibrant ties between the United States and Armenia. Our Nation is grateful for Armenia's contributions to the war on terror, particularly for its efforts to help build a peaceful and democratic Iraq. The United States remains committed to

working with Armenia and Azerbaijan to promote a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We are also working to promote democratic and economic reform in Armenia that will advance the cause of freedom and justice.

Laura and I express our deepest condolences to Armenian people around the world on this solemn day of remembrance. We stand together in our determination to build a more peaceful, more prosperous, and more just world.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 8132—Malaria Awareness Day, 2007

April 24, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans are fortunate to live in a land that eliminated malaria decades ago. Today, our country helps fight this disease in Africa, because we believe in the timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. On Malaria Awareness Day, we renew our commitment to helping combat malaria in Africa and around the world.

Tragically, one child in Africa dies every 30 seconds from malaria, a disease that is highly treatable and preventable. To reduce malaria's mortality rate in the hardest-hit African countries, I announced the President's Malaria Initiative in 2005, a five-year, \$1.2 billion program. At last year's White House Summit on Malaria, Laura and I were pleased to announce the expansion of this initiative to several additional countries. These efforts are making a difference, and millions of people have already benefited from insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor spraying, and anti-malaria medicine.

Across our Nation, Americans are answering the call to act. By simply donating an insecticide-treated bed net, one individual can help save a life. For more information about how to help and for a list of humanitarian organizations, visit fightingmalaria.gov.

* White House correction.